



# CONNECTICUT EMPLOYEES UNION INDEPENDENT

PO Box 1268  
Middletown, CT 06457

March 10, 2021

Government Administration and Elections

Testimony by Carl Chisem, President

Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511

**In Support of H.B. 6578 AN ACT CONCERNING PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

**In Support of S.B. 1017 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, my name is Carl Chisem and I am President of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511. We represent over 3,600 blue collar maintenance and service State workers. Our members provide valuable services within our state facilities. They cook, clean, repair, maintain and deliver in Connecticut's State buildings, hospitals, college campuses, airports, roads, bridges, and parks. I write in support of H.B. 6578 and S.B. 1017

**H.B. 6578 An Act Concerning Participation in the Electoral Process.** Codifying Automatic Voter Registration, as it exists now at the Department of Motor Vehicles, into state law is a huge first step. However, expanding AVR beyond DMV to other state agencies, including the Department of Social Services (DSS), HUSKY, Access Health CT, state colleges and universities and other state agencies, would improve this language by saving taxpayer money and increasing access to the democratic process.

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) will enhance the security and integrity of our elections by eliminating outdated addresses and duplicative registrations through an automatic process that will deliver the most accurate voter rolls to cities and towns. Eliminating duplicate registrations will reduce the workload for localities and lessen any chance for confusion or mishaps on Election Day. 77% of Connecticut voters support AVR and, across the country, localities have saved an average of about \$3.54 in labor costs per registration by implementing electronic measures for voter registration. Currently, nineteen states have versions of AVR.

H.B. 6578 would also restore the right to vote to people on parole who are re-entering their communities, eliminating the disenfranchisement parolees face in our current racist and inequitable system. With some of the most stringent laws in the Northeast, Connecticut is the only state in the region that still prohibits those on parole from voting. We must do better and eliminate this blatant discrimination of the primarily black and Latino population.

I ask the committee to support H.B. 6578.

**S.B. 1017 An Act Concerning Election Administration.** This bill simply contains language that would permanently retain the secure ballot drop boxes that were installed in our localities in 2020. Doing so will allow voters who currently qualify to vote absentee to have access to these ballot boxes making their vote easier to cast.

I urge the committee to support S.B. 1017.

Thank you.